
EXTENSION OF THE EU AND NATO TOWARDS THE EAST AND THE GROWING TOGETHER OF EUROPE

Conferência incluída no Ciclo de Conferências por individualidades estrangeiras, proferida no âmbito da CDN94, no IDN em Lisboa e na Delegação do Porto, em 25 e 28 de Janeiro de 1994, respectivamente.

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In the last weeks before the NATO Summit in Brussels on 10th January 1994 the number of opinions and items for discussion on the question of the expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance particularly to the States of Central Eastern Europe (Poland, the Slovak and Czech Republics and Hungary) rose sharply. The unexpected success of the neo-Fascist «Liberal Democratic Party of Russia» under its leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in the Russian parliamentary elections on 12th December 1993 made a particular contribution to this. Among the many aggressive statements by Zhirinovskiy, above all his claim that it would be right to reinstate the borders of the Russian Empire in 1917 must have caused alarm in Poland and in the three Baltic States. This further boosted their pressure for participation in the protection provided by NATO ⁽¹⁾.

The governments of the Western Alliance are for the moment however unwilling to decide on opening up NATO in favour of a certain group of states as a priority.

In this critics primarily see a questionable consideration for President Boris Yeltsin. The latter, and also Foreign Minister Kosyrev and Defence Minister Grachev have in recent months several times decisively turned against the entry of the Central European former member states of the Warsaw Pact into NATO. According to the views of the Russian Government, this would be a discriminatory exclusion of Russia, which would weaken democratic forces and only favour the opponents of reform.

The current debates are without exception suffering from the fact that they only place the yes or no to NATO expansion at the centre.

⁽¹⁾ Even observers who not long ago were still inclined to oppose excessive disquiet have been led to change their views by the outcome of the Russian elections. See for example the article by Adam Krzeminski «Czji Zachód znowu nas zdradził», in *Polityka*, n.º 49, 4-12-1993, pages 1/25, with his comments published three weeks later: Die neue deutschen Töne, in *Die Zeit*, n.º 52, 24-12-1993, page 3.

without being able to state in concrete terms why this should be offered or in contrast why it could be harmful.

Making this topic so absolute and so narrow will necessarily give the rejected Central Eastern European and Baltic states the bitter feeling of having to live in a grey area or buffer zone and be sacrificed where possible in the interests of larger neighbours («New Yalta») ⁽²⁾. Meanwhile, in Moscow, it is felt that the successful action of their own diplomacy must be certified ⁽³⁾.

On the other hand, it would be a matter for the West to make it clear that the argumentation of the Russian President and his supporters is in no way convincing and should therefore be rejected. However, there is justification for the hesitations of the Western Alliance on expansion in a necessary *broader* analytical approach, which is concerned with the continuing integration of the two halves of Europe artificially separated for so long. This approach is presented below.

DEFINITION OF WESTERN AIMS

The success of the post-communist transformation processes lies chiefly in the development interests of the Western democracies themselves. These democracies need, in Europe and Eurasia, instead of the former opponents or future receivers of aid, active partners in tackling together the challenges of the 21st century. Of the Western countries, Germany has, in view of its geographical location, a particular realistic political interest in the stabilisation of the democratic structures and the economic and social rehabilitation of its Eastern neighbours. However, in the European Union, after their forthcoming accession, Austria, Sweden and Finland will also share this interest. Moreover, Germany has quite specific responsibility

⁽²⁾ However, the former Polish Ambassador to the USA, Kazimierz Drievanovski, is critical to the concept of «new Yalta». Wywobanie Duchow, in: Rzeczpospolita, 15-11-1993, page 22.

⁽³⁾ See Dmitri Gornostaev, Rossijskaja Ekzamenov Sdavat' ne budet, in: Nezavisimaja Gazeta, 8-12-1993, page 4; and critical against this Vladimir Baranovski, Vnesnepolitickaja pobeda, ebenda.

on historical and moral grounds for the smaller states of Eastern Europe which were subject to the communist system as a result of the Second World War initiated by the National Socialist Third Reich. It would however be of little help to these states if they chiefly rely on the intercession of Germany and thus intensified the defensive distrust of France and other southern members of the European Union. In the longer term, Germany's Eastern neighbours will in any case revitalise traditional partnerships with other countries, to avoid unilateral dependencies.

When discussing Western aims, which are to be achieved by «Eastern extension» of the EU and NATO, it is not really a matter of ideological confirmation of the triumph over the communist system or merely the creation of larger markets. Nor indeed is it sufficient to cite the strengthening of the «North-Eastern» wing of the EU, the gaining of a geopolitical central position for Germany or a containment of new dangers emanating in future from Russia as Western motives. *At the heart of the matter, it is more a case of whether and how the «Eastern extension» can contribute to stabilisation and the achievement of the political and economic transformation in the post-communist states of Communist System Central Eastern Europe, and so all members of the EU and NATO must deal with this unanimously as a joint task.*

If and insofar as this core question is to be answered in the affirmative, the existing members of the EU and NATO must realise that they have to make a sacrifice in solidarity (the historic «equalisation of burdens») and the ideas entertained up to 1989 on the further development of their links must be partially revised. This realisation is however still missing in the governments and in the societies of the West. Otherwise it would be clear that it cannot simply be a matter for examining and determining the achievement of «readiness for accession» unilaterally defined in the West in the form of the full «acquis communautaire» at a point X in time. What is required is rather support for the transformation processes in the phase of preparation for accession and then, after accession, possibly granting the new members easier conditions for some considerable time. At the same time, it must be obviously pointed out openly and without reservations that it would not help either the old members or the candidates

for accession if the burdens of the EU ⁽⁴⁾ and NATO associated with the preparation or the entry of new members were to become so onerous that the two associations were no longer viable and fell apart.

TRANSFORMATION AND THE PRIORITY FOR OPENING UP TO THE EU

The transformation of the post-communist system above all calls for internal political and economic-social reconstruction. For this purpose, and also to overcome the thinking in spheres of nationalistic sovereignty, the approach to and participation in the integration of the EU can obviously make a much broader and deeper contribution than the NATO defence alliance. An extension of NATO towards the East serves, according to the rules, to secure the transformation which has begun against threats through external powers and forces. Only to this extent can one speak of an internal policy effect of accession to NATO, when it can help in disseminating experiences and models for the incorporation of armed military forces in a pluralistic democracy and make them fruitful. The assertion occasionally heard in Eastern Europe, and also brought forward by Western authors ⁽⁵⁾, that NATO offers its members valuable assistance in building democratic structures, seems in contrast to be at the least contrived, and in some cases (Greece 1967-1974, Portugal up to 1975, and Turkey) it is demonstrably incorrect. Prioritisation in terms of time for an extension of NATO towards the East would therefore be incorrect with regard to transformation policy. It could only be justified if an external threat could be made at least plausible in the foreseeable future. This is however precisely what is missing so far (for further details, see last Section).

With regard to the contribution of EU membership to internal transformation, it is obvious that there should be warnings against excessively

⁽⁴⁾ See the attempt at financial cost assessment particularly for the Polish case, by Thimo W. Eser/Martin Hallet. *Der mögliche Beitrag der EG-Regionalpolitik bei einer Osterweiterung der EG: Hilfe oder Hindernis?* (The possible contribution of EC regional politics in Eastern expansion of the EC: Help or hindrance?). in: *Osteuropa-Wirtschaft*, Vol. 38, n.º 3 (1993), pages 195-217.

⁽⁵⁾ See for instance the essay by Ronald D. Asmus/Richard L. Kugler/F. Stephen Larabee, *Building a New NATO*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, n.º 4 (1993), pages 28-40.

high expectations. Above all, hopes that membership would guarantee the new member access to subsidies from the coffers of the Community would be understandable, but shortsighted. The more dependent a candidate for access or a new member is shown to be on concessions and subsidies from the other members, the sooner the danger arises of insufficient means being available to support the entire transformation process in the post-communist zone adequately. This means that prospects of extension and accession require the candidate to provide its own resources for successful transformation to a certain degree. In terms of economics, the decisive usefulness of membership for transformation consists of a challenge: the opening up of frontiers to a common market forces the change from the previous egalitarian society of «realistic socialism» to the competitive society of the Western world. Certainly, the repeatedly observed attempts of the Western European countries hitherto, to block access to their own markets to suppliers from countries undergoing transformation precisely where they are competitive will thus cease. However, participation in the common market, even with successful preparation and with special conditions continuing, involves more strict compulsion to adapt for the country gaining access and hence potentially important political and social dynamite: in contrast to the extension to the South, the candidates for accession from the East not only have to face the encounter with the superior, experienced participants of the capitalist world market, but also, at least provisionally, the internal stresses associated with the transition from the egalitarian to the competitive society. To this extent the opening effect necessarily linked to the prospects of extension and accession could disturb the autonomous control of the transformation by the state government concerned. When social unrest (such as that of the Polish farmers) is combined with ideological aversion to the introduction of «more liberal» foreign values and forms of behaviour (e.g. in the clerical/nationalistic parties in Poland such as the ZChN), the consequence could be a change or even collapse of the government.

Conversely, it is also evident what negative consequences must arise for the image of a government and the social acceptance of the transformation process if in spite of all their own efforts the community of Western countries does not honour these endeavours and rejects the decades of efforts by the Eastern Europeans for unification with the luckier part of the continent, all the more so after the collapse of the tremendous

system and bloc boundaries. In addition, in Western Europe it is not sufficiently noticed how important participation with equal entitlement and equal obligation for Eastern Europeans in consultation and decisions of the Western alliances is for the internal assimilation processes. As long as the forms of participation only offer the right to make representations, there is no compulsion to take back home and implement what has been decided in Brussels with their own active cooperation. This applies above all for those areas in which the transfer is not primarily and immediately a question of cost, such as for example in the cultural sector, which in a particular way leads to the international meeting of people, and further in many partial areas of assimilation of laws (such as in procedural law, in criminal law and constitutional and administrative law), but also to some extent in the field of united foreign policy. For this reason the objection to the opening up of the EU, alleging that the countries undergoing transformation are for the present unable to bear the financial burdens of the joint EU programme, is only partially correct and conceals chances for integration which are also available.

THE NEED FOR SELECTIVE OPENING UP OF THE EU

The decided opponents of extension of the EU and NATO towards the East not infrequently use the argument that if an extension were to be considered, it would have to include all post-communist states, since any limitation would have discriminatory exclusion effects which could neither be plausibly justified nor reconciled with the aims of stability and freedom for the whole of Europe. On the other hand, some who are verbally in favour of expansion can be clearly seen to be searching primarily to torpedo the «deepening» of EU integration. The request of the Eastern Europeans is used actually as a disturbing factor against the objectives of the Maastricht programme of the EU. The open opponents of any extension towards the East feel once again that this confirms their negative attitude.

The connection postulated above between transformation and EU membership therefore demands a practicable middle way between the apparent alternatives of «all or nothing». *Preferences* based on plausible criteria must be developed for this purpose, to enable a group of candidates for accession to be accepted with priority, or to establish a timed sequence

for several groups. However, to avoid the problematical effects of the impression that the remaining states undergoing transformation are excluded and isolated, it will be necessary to offer these too concrete forms of support suitable for their situation, extending beyond nonbinding communiques and resolutions.

If therefore preferred groups are to be defined, a combination of the following criteria appears most appropriate:

- Rewarding services for the evolutionary conquest of the orthodox communist system up to 1989.
- Visible progress and success in establishing and stabilising the essential features of a pluralistic democracy (division of powers, free government under law/special protection of minorities, a party system, and a free press).
- Traditional closeness and affinity with the *political* culture of Western Europe.
- The first visible successes in the economic transformation, which however should not be restricted to the implementation of market economy regulative principles but must also put a stop to the social impoverishment of broad sectors of the population and the increasing uncertainty about the rule of law.
- Their own efforts in subregional cooperation as a preparation for membership of the EU integration.

This combination leads to a clear preference for the four Visegrád states. (If purely economic factors were used, this would probably lead to a division of the Visegrád group as follows: the Czech Republic and Hungary would have good prospects for candidature, whilst Slovakia and — in spite of the top position achieved in 1993 in the comparison of increases in gross domestic product — Poland too would initially have to wait). The next group to follow would then be the three Baltic states, apart from the individual case of Slovenia which, on account of its direct proximity to Italy and Austria, scarcely involves any problems.

The remaining countries in South-Eastern Europe do not suffer any damage from such an order of preference. If for example the Visegrád states were similarly excluded, their potential would in no way suffice to assist the other countries in their transformation. On the other hand, the

successes already achieved by the Visegrád states and their subregional alliance introduced in 1990 would even threaten to fall into stagnation or possibly into regression. At that time Brussels welcomed and encouraged the subregional cooperation of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary as an important preparatory stage on the way to the larger integration community. It is to be regretted, insofar as the European Council gave the impression in Copenhagen on 21/22 June 1993 that in future it wished all countries with which association agreements («Europe treaties») existed, that is also Bulgaria and Romania, to be given the same treatment (*). Indeed, since the dissolution of Czechoslovakia at the end of 1992 it has been observed that the Czech government under Prime Minister Václav Klaus attaches little importance to the association of Visegrád states. It is precisely for this reason that the EU should insist on active participation in subregional cooperation as an essential requirement for acceptance into the larger European integration. In general however it is true that setbacks and disappointment would place a greater burden on the future prospects for transformation in the countries which have made the greatest progress than in those where so far no visible progress has been achieved. At the same time the example of successful transformation rewarded by Western Europe by acceptance into the EU would act as an incentive to other post-communist countries.

With this approach, in particular two major groups of states would be left behind, and useful concrete alternatives would have to be found for them in place of the prospects of expansion and accession: the CIS zone and the Balkan zone. In spite of considerable problems in the reciprocal relations between the CIS countries it still appears quite possible to develop satisfactory relationships of partnership with this «Eurasian» commonwealth of states. In the CIS states there is at least evidence that the initial euphoria concerning the independence of the successor states of the former Soviet Union is diminishing and there is a growing degree of willingness for cooperation in the context of the CIS, insofar as Russia does not give in to the temptation to use this willingness to reinstate its own supremacy. Doubts in this connection were recently voiced by the Kazakh President

(*) See Section 7 A of the published results of consultation in: Europe-Documents, n.º 1844/45, 24-6-1993.

Nazarbacy who so far has emerged as the most important non-Russian advocate of closer cooperation within the framework of the CIS, as he compared the statement by Foreign Minister Kozyrev on the function of Russia as a protective power for the Russians in the other CIS countries with Hitler's role as a protector for the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia (⁷). In fact, after what is sometimes called the «honey-moon» phase of the new foreign policy in Russia by Russian critics, trends have now emerged which would make the Moscow distinction between «far» and «near» foreign countries look increasingly ominous, since Russia claims an internationally recognised special regulative role in relation to the latter. Similarly, the concept of «near» foreign countries obscures the distinction between the territorial areas of the CIS and the «former Soviet Union», so that it is left unclear to what extent the Moscow claim is also intended to cover the three Baltic states.

The position in the Balkans is even more difficult; after the chaotic destruction of Yugoslavia, which has brought the earlier approaches to closer regional cooperation to nothing, for the moment partial solutions for Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania and possibly also for Croatia — where it is also apparent that belonging to the «Roman» sphere of culture does not necessarily offer better prospects for the implementation of democratic values than in the countries of the «Byzantine» tradition — and Montenegro or even merely food aid programmes for Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia are possible. The prospects of the transformations processes in the Balkan region as a whole are obviously dependent on whether the brutal disregard of the principles of democracy by the warring parties in the former Yugoslavia can be ended and the earlier approaches to cooperation in the Balkan countries can be revived, with the participation of Turkey and Greece.

SECURITY FOR EASTERN EUROPE

In spite of the hardening of the Russian attitude to a possible expansion of NATO to Central and Eastern Europe which emerged long before the Russian parliamentary elections, and regardless of the increased urgings of

(⁷) See *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Reuter), 26-11-1995, page 6.

the Central Eastern Europeans and the Baltic states for immediate acceptance into NATO, the prospects of a solution satisfactory to all parties are not yet entirely blocked. Closer inspection reveals that the fears of Central Eastern Europeans and those of the Russians are not sufficiently justified. Without exception they are based on general geopolitical considerations or historical reminiscences and avoid a concrete statement of the assumed hazards which can be discussed. Consequently the following should be placed under discussion:

On the one hand, the Russian assertion as contained in particular in an analysis presented in November 1993 by a committee of experts of the Russian External Intelligence Agency under Yevgeny Primakow (*) and since then repeated by the Russian President and other leading politicians appears highly questionable: any advance by NATO as far as the borders of Russia or the CIS will be perceived as a threat by the Russian public and would demand an expensive reorientation of the Russian defence policy. What constitutes the alleged threat through the extended defence alliance of democratic states, with which the post-communist Russia still seeks to develop broad partnership relations, has however not been substantiated anywhere. Rather should it have been expected that the Russian democrats would also welcome a decision by the Western alliance to protect the smaller countries undergoing transformation against developments which would likewise bring the future of democracy into Russia into question.

To this extent, the attitude of Yeltsin can only be explained in that there are fears in Moscow of being isolated from the rest of Europe if NATO is not restructured to form a total European security system (°). However, in reality such anxiety about isolation is chiefly based on the failure of the internal «Perestroika» and the transformation of Russia which have brought most people in the country disappointment, uncertainty and bitterness. Neither Gorbachev and his successor Yeltsin, nor the Western

(*) See *Izvestija*, 26-11-1993, page 4; *Nevavisimaja Gazeta* 26-11-1993, pages 1/3. Such topics also appear in the new Russian military doctrine recently established, see published extracts in: *Izvestija*, 18-12-1993, pages 1/4.

(°) See Andrei *Kozyrev*, «Cto nam delat's NATO?» (What is NATO doing to us?) in *Moskovskie Novosti*, n.º 39, 26-9-1993, page A 7. The statements of two Moscow political observers repeated in the West, Sergej *Karaganov* in: *Moskovskie Novosti*, n.º 38, page A 7, and, alexei *Arbatov*. *Tri ugla zrenija na problemu vstuplenija Polli NATO in Nezavisimaja Gazeta*, 1-10-1993, page 4, also point in the same direction as the Russian Foreign Minister.

states have so far to managed develop concepts pointing to a practical way of overcoming the burdensome inheritance of the Socialist system which Russian society can accept and implement.

Thoughts of assisting Yeltsin and the Russian reformers by temporarily setting aside the expansion of NATO towards the East are therefore taking the wrong approach. Such consideration can scarcely make a contribution to improving the prerequisites for the reforms to succeed. Instead of this, they send out a problematic signal which restricts our thinking to outdated categories of «spheres of influence».

Moreover, the argumentation of the Central Eastern Europeans to date is also lacking in substance. Even a scenario in which great Russian Fascists in Moscow come into power is far from meaning that a future president Zhirinovsky could then bring his paranoid announcements into reality. Today the situation is not to be compared with that in 1939, when Stalin and Hitler reached agreement on the division of «Central Europe», nor with the situation in 1945, when the soviet communists could build on forces in the neighbouring Western states freed from the German yoke who saw in the introduction of socialism the guarantee of a better future in their countries. Each further attempt to reinstate the Russian hegemony and the coordination of Central Eastern Europe would call for the setting up of a purely military regime of occupation. Before any leadership in Moscow could decide on this, the political unity and economic power of Russia would first have to be regenerated, in order to direct them towards the elimination of the newly achieved independence of the other CIS countries.

The urging of the Central Eastern Europeans for accession to NATO is also ultimately based on the grounds of finally and permanently overcoming the division and isolation from the Western part of Europe. This is evident from the fact that after the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, the Central Eastern Europeans first gave priority to the Western European integration of the EC. Only later did it emerge that the Western Europeans are not ready to grant this wish in the next decade, and where possible will seek other reasons for postponing it, and Central Eastern Europeans to some extent see membership of NATO as a substitute which could perhaps be achieved more easily.

The only region which could in fact be endangered by a return to greater Russian expansion tendencies is the three Baltic States. The unsolved

problem of the Russian minorities in Estonia and Latvia — obviously also caused by the Baltic nationalists — or the conceivable conflicts about Russian access to the Kaliningrad area could give opportunities for the military supremacy of Russia to come into play, if the Baltic States did not have allies standing by their side.

What *conclusions* can be drawn from this survey of the security problem in the Eastern part of Europe?

Firstly there is the matter of the implementation of the programme on «Partnership for Peace» decided on by NATO in Brussels on 10/11 January 1994, which is to revive under new auspices the idea initially emerging in 1991 on the creation of the «North Atlantic Cooperation Council» (NACC), to bring together the Soviet Union and the Central Eastern Europeans previously compelled to be allies and now free to enter three-way talks. After the unforeseeable dissolution of the USSR first only gave rise to the NACC changing into a mere catchment basin for the estate of the bankrupt soviet system, it is now a matter of creating closer bilateral and subregional multilateral structures for dialogue and cooperation within the NACC. The aim of this must be to help in setting aside mutual mistrust and promoting the beginnings of neighbourly partnership in place of the complicated system of exclusions. In particular, dialogue and cooperation between Russia and Poland, or between Russia and the three Baltic states, with the active mediation and participation of a few NATO members, should be promoted. In Russia there will then at least be a distinction between those who were actually motivated only by the anxiety concerning isolation from Europe, and those who want to retain the soviet and the pre-soviet imperial zones of influence in Central Eastern Europe and in the Baltics. And Poland would no longer need to fear the West abandoning it, together with its other Central Eastern European and Baltic neighbours, in a «buffer» or «grey zone».

Secondly, and above all, Western Europeans must, in spite of their own internal economic crises which have recently become pressing, develop more commitment and solidarity together with the USA, to ensure that the post-communist transformation processes achieve visible success. The self-satisfied hope at the beginning of this decade, that the collapse of

communism would automatically bring into play the healing powers of democracy and the market , has meanwhile proven to be an illusion. The West must finally discard this notion.

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